



# Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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## **WSDA offers toll-free number (1-800-843-7890) for food safety complaints**

**OLYMPIA** – Does that bottle of water smell or taste a little funny? Did you find something that didn't belong in your energy bar? If so, call 1-800-843-7890 and report it.

The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) has set up a toll-free number for food safety complaints. The complaints can be about food you purchased at the grocery store or ate in a restaurant, or about a food processor or warehouse facility.

"We want to provide a place where people can lodge a complaint, regardless of whether WSDA is the appropriate agency to follow-up or whether the complaint needs to be referred to another federal, state or local agency," said Linda Condon, Food Safety Program specialist. "This will help us know quickly whether a food safety concern is an isolated situation or one that involves a larger population. Plus it helps us do a better job of protecting the public."

Condon said WSDA receives an average of two or three complaints a week. After an initial investigation, the report may be sent to the Food and Drug Administration or county health department, depending on the situation. Or one of WSDA's 30 food safety officers will follow-up on a complaint involving dairy or milk products or a food processing facility. For food products that are under the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) jurisdiction (meat, poultry and egg products), the reports are forwarded to USDA officials for the initial phase of the investigation.

If the product resulted in an illness, the person will be contacted within 24 hours of filing a complaint, Condon said.

Condon was quick to point out that WSDA has always responded to food safety complaints. The new, toll-free number is simply a way to make it easier for the public to bring a problem to someone's attention. Consumers can also file a complaint on WSDA's Web site. Go to [www.agr.wa.gov](http://www.agr.wa.gov), click on Food & Animals and then consumer food complaints.

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